Glossary

Module 3

SPS Agreement definition of risk assessment:
"the evaluation of the likelihood of entry, establishment or spread of a pest or disease within the territory of an importing Member (of the WTO) according to the sanitary or phytosanitary measures which might be applied, and of the associated potential biological and economic consequences, or the evaluation of the potential for adverse effects on human or animal health arising from the presence of additives, contaminants, toxins, or disease-causing organisms in food, feedstuffs and beverages). (SPS Annex A)

Hazard identification:
The process of identifying the biological agents that could potentially be introduced in the commodity considered for importation. A hazard represents elements or events that are potentially harmful. In risk assessment, hazard is specified by describing what might go wrong and how this might happen. A particular item or event may not pose a hazard in itself, but its introduction into a scenario where it can cause harm presents a hazard.

Transparency:
The prompt sharing with all interested parties of comprehensive documentation showing all data, assumption, methods, results, discussion and conclusions used in a risk analysis. Conclusions are supported by an objective and logical discussion and the document is fully referenced.

Uncertainty:
The lack of accurate or precise knowledge of the input values which is due to measurement error or to the lack of knowledge of the steps required, and the pathways from hazard to risk, when building the model of the scenario being addressed. It includes uncertainty:

- Of the process (methodology)
- Of the risk assessor (human error)
- Of the organisms (biological unknowns)

Probability:
The degree to which there is a likelihood that adverse effects will occur from a pest or a disease. The evidence of existing or potential presence of a pest or disease and the likelihood of adverse effects is a key factor influencing the analysis of probability. It also is a factor that influences the degree of confidence regarding the evidence. Evidence is:

- Data collected as part of a risk assessment investigation
- The quantity or quality of the data that is collected

The more resources you put in the more data you will get. The better your risk assessment, the more confidence you have in your output. The quality of evidence will help increase confidence.

Acceptable risk:
Risk level judged to be compatible with the protection of animal, plant, and public health, taking into account epidemiological, biological, social and economical factors. It is a management decision with regard to the permissibility of a hazard, a decision made (in the risk management process) about the safety of a regulatory decision or the acceptability of a hazardous event.

Regionalization:
Under the SPS Agreement, signatory countries are committed to recognizing areas of regions of low animal disease incidence or risk and allowing trade to occur from those areas. They can do so by adapting their sanitary requirements to the health conditions of the zone or area from which a live animal or product originates. The APHIS policy now recognizes that, for the purpose of evaluating disease risk, a region may be defined as any geographic land area identifiable by geological, political, or surveyed boundaries. In other words, within a single country there may be many regions that have different risk characteristics that would necessitate the imposition of different import requirements.

Quarantine pest:
A pest of potential economic importance to the area endangered thereby and not yet present there, or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled.